



## PRESS RELEASE

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### COUNTY RECOGNIZED FOR TRANSPARENT COMMUNICATIONS AS A LEADER AMONG VIRGINIA LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

For Immediate Release

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For Additional Information:

Please Contact Christopher Whitlow, Assistant County Administrator (540) 483-3030

**Rocky Mount, Virginia ---** [Franklin County](#) officials today announced the County has been awarded a [Virginia Association of Counties \(VACo\)](#) 2012 Achievement Award. This award recognizes the very best of model local government programs among Virginia's ninety-five counties. [Franklin County](#) won the communications category "Transparency for a Citizen's Dollar" for its interactive budget website portal.

In recognizing [Franklin County](#), [VACo](#) officials stated "The County of Franklin identified an opportunity for its citizens to become a crucial part of the budget process by providing them with a free interactive budget website. This website empowered every interested citizen with the very same documents and data that the Board of Supervisors would use during the budget process". "It always amazes me the level of competition for Achievement Awards," said James Campbell, [VACo](#) executive director. "This year is no exception. Competition is fierce".

Last December, the County launched its budget portal on the County's website: <http://www.franklincountyva.gov> . While the County has long posted its budgets and financial reports online, the new budget portal synchronizes multiple budget items into one central location. The budget site provides informational topics designed for navigational ease including:

- Description guide to the budget process
- Calendar of budget meetings and work sessions
- Previous and current year budgets
- County financial health information
- Factors affecting current and future budgets
- Comparison budget and tax information from adjoining localities
- Citizen input module for residents wishing to give budget feedback and suggestions

In addition to the site's comprehensive budget information and navigational ease, the site further allows residents to stay connected with their County budget through social media avenues like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. "Franklin County recognizes that citizens expect both transparency and connectivity in their daily activities. The local government budget is not excluded from this expectation" stated Richard E. Huff, II, County Administrator.

The County's budget website encompasses a comprehensive look at County finances, including demographic, tax, and spending comparative data. Website users can examine how the County fares with its neighbors in various program areas, as well as offer budget input and keep up with the latest budget activities (presentations, meetings, work sessions, public hearings, etc.).

The [VACo](#) Achievement Awards is a competitive program open to local government members of the association. Marilyn Blake, one of this year's Achievement Award judges, notes that "Counties understand it's important to be recognized for superior work, but it's even more vital to share innovative ideas and programs with each other. The Achievement Awards program allows counties and the public to view the creative work that's happening today in local government."

For more information, visit VACo's Achievement Awards website ([www.vaco.org/achievementawards.html](http://www.vaco.org/achievementawards.html)) where you can view all 2012 entries ([www.vaco.org/achievementawards2012.html](http://www.vaco.org/achievementawards2012.html)).

Franklin County will receive a certificate at an official ceremony during VACo's 2012 Annual Conference in November. Also, [VACo](#) will present the award at a future Board of Supervisors meeting.

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[VACo](#) exists to support county officials and to effectively represent, promote and protect the interests of counties to better serve the people of Virginia.

**For more information Virginia Association of Counties**

Gage Harter 1207 East Main Street  
804-343-2502 Richmond, Va. 23219

[gharter@vaco.org](mailto:gharter@vaco.org)

[www.vaco.org](http://www.vaco.org)